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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - FEBRUARY 12

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Security Situation

¶2. (SBU) MONUC noted reports of clashes between FDLR and FARDC forces west of Luofo in Lubero Territory. RDF troops have moved from Pinga in Walikale Territory southwest towards Lukweti in Masisi Territory. According to MONUC, additional RDF deployments are located in Nyamalina and along the axis between Masisi and Walikale.

¶3. (SBU) Several local sources in South Kivu reported that FDLR cadre continue to prevent civilians from leaving a heavily populated area directly west of Lake Kivu. While some observers fear the FDLR may retaliate against the population or use people as human shields, others opine that the FDLR remains dependent on the locals for the provision of its food, and are simply protecting its supply.

¶4. (SBU) The UN will deploy Joint Protection Teams (JPT) to five sites in North Kivu: Pinga, Nyamilima, Nyabiondo, Kanyabayonga, and Walikale. Another JPT is planned for Dungu in Orientale Province. The JPTs consist of personnel from MONUC's Political Affairs, Civil Affairs, and Child Protection Divisions, as well as OCHA. The teams will assess areas considered to be at greatest risk for displacement and humanitarian assistance, and attempt to preposition assistance to these areas. All of the JPTs should be operational by the end of this week.

Integration Process

¶5. (SBU) The Mubambiro integration site was scheduled to open on February 11. This site focuses primarily on the integration of Pareco into the FARDC. While some armed Pareco are participating in the accelerated integration process, others are unarmed, with little training, so they will undergo the regular integration process.

¶6. (SBU) Goma PolOff reported that the large increase in CNDP integration numbers over the last week was impressive, but some observers believe that some CNDP units have been formed as companies or even battalions, rather than as integrated units within the FARDC.

¶7. (SBU) The integration effort will now focus on CNDP units near Masisi. Colonel Makenge, the CNDP's military commander, reportedly leads these units. Makenge was initially reluctant to join the internal revolt against Nkunda, as well as to integrate into the FARDC. (Comment: Makenge may insist that troops loyal to him be retained as formed units. If he does, the accelerated integration process remains far from complete, and the specter of dissatisfied CNDP units refusing to affiliate with the FARDC remains a real

possibility. End Comment.)

Humanitarian Situation

¶8. (SBU) OHCA reported that, as of February 8, 2,641 IDP households (approximately 12,300 individuals) remained in Goma-area public sites, representing less than half of the IDP populations at the peak of displacement. Remaining IDP's have been given the option of relocating to Mungunga III IDP camp, co-locating with host families, or returning to areas of origin, as additional assistance will not be provided at public site locations. According to OHCA, the majority of IDP's have expressed a desire to return home.

¶9. (SBU) A February 11 USAID/DART assessment trip from Goma to Rutshuru town revealed significant population returns throughout villages and towns along the main road in formerly CNDP-held territory. This area includes Kibumba, Rugari, Rubare, Rutshuru, and Kiwanja.

¶10. (SBU) OCHA representative shared two scenarios as part of contingency planning for South Kivu. In the first scenario, the joint operations remain concentrated in North Kivu, with a spill over to South Kivu affecting 422,000 people, including 125,000 IDP's from North to South Kivu. In the second scenario, the joint operations expand into South Kivu, affecting 422,000 people, but with 250,000 IDP's. In both scenarios, humanitarian access remains reduced because of potential clashes between FARDC/RDF and FDLR forces.

Obasanjo Visit

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¶11. (U) Radio Okapi reported that UN Special Envoy Olusegun Obasanjo, during a February 11 visit to Goma, met separately with MONUC, CNDP, and GDRC officials, all of whom "were speaking the same language" regarding the question of the Nairobi political talks. Obasanjo reportedly called for an early resumption of the talks, adding that other armed groups, such as the Mai Mai and Pareco, should also be included. CNDP Spokesman Kambasu Ngeve reiterated that the CNDP had turned away from military issues to concentrate on political questions.

Operation Lightning Thunder

¶12. (SBU) MONUC Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Colonel Cunliffe reported that the UPDF Commander in Dungu, Patrick Kankiriho, was willing to set up a Joint Operations Center with MONUC in Dungu to coordinate and share information.

GARVELINK